Secretary Baker

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CSCE: Building Together For the Future

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Following are remarks by Secretary James A. Baker, III, at the Conference on Security in Europe (CSCE) Ministerial Meeting, Jacob Javits Center, New York, NY, October 1, 1990.

Colleagues, let me begin by joining President Bush in welcoming you to the first meeting of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) ever to be held in the United States of America. The symbol of our ministerial meeting—the Statue of Liberty's torch—holds a special meaning for the CSCE. The Statue of Liberty was given by the French people to the people of the United States over a century ago. The French advocate of republican democracy, Laboulaye, originated this gift because he believed that America had found the balance between liberty and stability that at that time eluded France.

France, subsequently, found that balance in democracy as did others. But many of the nations of Central and Eastern Europe have yet to achieve it. If we all work together, I am confident that the CSCE process can help them to be successful.

In that context, let me note here the pleasure of my government that in just over 24 hours the goal of a united democratic Germany will be achieved. As every American president, every secretary of state, and every Congress since the signing of the 1975 [Helsinki] Final Act have done, the United States here affirms our strong commitment to the CSCE, to its democratic aims, and to its development. We believe that this meeting can help prepare the way for a strengthened CSCE process, one capable of meeting the challenges that lie ahead in Europe's future.

At this time of dramatic change, all of us are seeing—more clearly than ever before—that a democratic, prosperous, and peaceful Europe can only be achieved if Americans and Europeans work together to build it. Together, we must build a new Europe:

- Upon the strong pillars of political legitimacy, respect for human rights, and the rule of law;
- Upon a solid framework of market principles;
- Upon the foundation of confidence that only a treaty on conventional [armed] forces in Europe (CFE) and other key security-building measures can ensure;
- Upon the bedrock of security that comes from firm commitments to peace, to sovereignty, and to self-determination; and
- Upon the mutually reinforcing cornerstone of NATO [North Atlantic Treaty Organization], the European Community, and CSCE.

Six Core Proposals to Strengthen CSCE

I would like to focus on how CSCE can contribute to the construction of a whole Europe, a free Europe, a secure Europe. I want to talk about how together we can build a new European architecture, different from all the empires and regimes and orders that have risen and fallen before.

For the past 15 years, CSCE has served as a political bridge across the East-West divide, fostering the flow of ideas, people, and information, and creating opportunities for peaceful, far-reaching change. Now, CSCE must deepen and consolidate the very changes that it has done so much to engender. As I see it, CSCE's principal challenge now is to help establish genuine processes of democratic nation-building and cooperation. We must build the means to ensure that the peoples of Central and Eastern Europe will always be a part of the mainstream of European life.

To do this, CSCE will need fresh political direction. And, it must develop methods of work that will be effective in Europe's new political environment. The time has come to strengthen CSCE both politically and institutionally.

The CSCE summit in Paris could accelerate this effort. Much of the ground work has already been laid in Copenhagen, in Bonn, in Sofia, and Vienna. The six core proposals put forward last June at NATO's London Summit are a clear demonstration of the reinforcing role that NATO can play in CSCE. Their adoption would:

First, create a constructive and continuing high-level dialogue during a dynamic time for Europe politically, economically, and militarily;

Second, enable CSCE to plan more systematically for the longer-term through fixed-interval, follow-up meetings;

Third, establish a small permanent administrative secretariat to give our stepped-up activities support;

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Fourth, create an elections monitoring office through which established democracies can lend experience and support to those that are just emerging;

Fifth, enhance CSCE's parliamentary dimension as Central and East European nations are forming representative systems and forms of government; and

Sixth, establish a conflict prevention center to promote confidence, predictability, and transparency through exchanges of military information and discussions of unusual military activities and to facilitate the conciliation of disputes.

In short, these proposals from the London NATO summit are a coherent, workable, substantive program for furthering CSCE's development. They reflect CSCE's lean and flexible character—assets that I think we would do well to preserve, given the fast pace of change in Europe. These proposals follow a sound architectural precept, and that precept is that form follows function. They would not duplicate, but they would complement, the work performed by other bodies. This is particularly the case in the security area, where NATO remains central to collective defense.

I hope these proposals will receive agreement in principle here, and that they will be embraced by our leaders later on in Paris. If so, we will have prepared CSCE well for the future.

Military Stability

But our hopeful summit designs for a strengthened CSCE must rest on a durable structure of military stability. To hold a CSCE summit before we complete a CFE treaty would be foolish, and it would be building the future on a slipshod, unstable foundation. My government thus remains convinced that the completion of a CFE Treaty is an essential precondition to holding the CSCE summit.

We must match the political revolution of last fall with a military revolution this fall. Signing the CFE treaty will mark our irreversible disengagement from the Cold War, locking in a new post-Cold War military order.

But even as we disengage as adversaries, CSCE can help us reengage as partners united in a common purpose: to free the whole of Europe from the legacy of Cold War and from the hatreds and conflicts that preceded it for generations. Two hot wars and almost half a century of Cold War reinforce the truth embodied in Helsinki's 10 guiding principles: respect for human dignity and democratic values is just as critical to lasting peace in Europe as is military security.

Baltic States

And now let me say just a word about Latvia, Lithuania, and Estonia. We reaffirm President Ford's statement at the signing of the Final Act that that did not change the position of the United States on the status of the Baltic states. At the Washington summit, President Bush stressed again our view that a systematic dialogue must be pursued so that the aspirations of the Baltic peoples can be achieved.

Conclusion

Like the Statue of Liberty's torch, the Helsinki Final Act lights the path for democratic, for peaceful, for far-reaching change in Europe. In the last eventful year, we have traveled far along that path. This meeting will take us further, and the Paris summit can mark a major milestone. But many other milestones, of course, have yet to be reached, and colleagues, I have no doubt that together we will reach them. ■

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